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J.C.S. 1907/103

19 January 1954

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JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

DECISION ON J.C.S. 1907/103

A Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee
on

NSC 5404 - U.S. POLICY ON BERLIN

Note by the Secretaries

1. At their meeting on 19 January 1954, after making amendments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the recommendation in paragraph 15 of J.C.S. 1907/103.

2. Holders are requested to substitute the attached revised pages 600 to 604 inclusive, incorporating the amendments, and to destroy the superseded pages by burning.

3. The memorandum in the Enclosure was forwarded to the Secretary of Defense, dated 19 January 1954.

4. This decision now becomes a part of and shall be attached as the top sheet of J.C.S. 1907/103.

EDWIN H. J. CARNS,
RICHARD H. PHILLIPS,
Joint Secretariat.

DECLASSIFIED BY:
JCS DECLASSIFICATION BRANCH
DATE 31 Oct 71

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J.C.S. 1907/103

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18 January 1954

Pages 599 - 604, incl.

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REPORT BY THE JOINT STRATEGIC SURVEY COMMITTEE

to the

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

NSC 5404 - U.S. POLICY ON BERLIN

- References: a. J.C.S. 1907/77
b. J.C.S. 1907/101
c. J.C.S. 1907/102

381 (8-10-43) Sec 38 S.O.

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See decision on Std (1-17-54)

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1-28-54

1-18-54

NSC 5404 - U.S. POLICY ON BERLIN

THE PROBLEM

1. To submit comments and recommendations to the Secretary of Defense concerning NSC 5404 - "U.S. Policy on Berlin."*
2. The Secretary of Defense should receive the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by 1200, 19 January 1954.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

3. NSC 5404 has been prepared by the NSC Planning Board as a revision of NSC 173** pursuant to NSC Action No. 978-a,*** quoted below:

"a. Discussed the statement of policy contained in the reference report NSC 173 on the subject, and referred NSC 173 to the NSC Planning Board for revision in the light of the discussion."

4. NSC 5404 is intended, if adopted, to supersede NSC 132/1.***

CONCLUSIONS

5. All factors considered, the Western Powers are now in a stronger military position relative to the Soviet Bloc than they were in 1949. Therefore, the bracketed portion proposed for addition to subparagraph 4 a of NSC 5404 should not be adopted.

6. Subparagraph 4 f should be amended to establish the fact that to sustain Berlin for a considerable period of time a full-scale airlift would be required.

7. Paragraph 6 is considered to be contrary to the basic philosophy of the policy as epitomized in paragraph 5, and should be omitted from the statement of policy.

8. The inclusion or omission of the words "if necessary" in subparagraph 8 c is of no real consequence.

9. Subparagraph 8 e should be amended to make clear that an airlift would not be resorted to as a primary measure to counter

* Enclosure to J.C.S. 1907/102

** Enclosure to J.C.S. 1907/101

*** On file in J.C.S. Secretariat

**** Enclosure "B" to J.C.S. 1907/77

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a blockade, but rather that the airlift into Berlin would be only a supplement to other more positive actions in preparation or in progress.

10. Subparagraph 9 d, as now phrased, appears to emphasize an airlift as a primary counteraction to a blockade. This subparagraph is considered to be unnecessary, but if it is to be included in the statement of policy, it should be amended by deleting all after the word "open".

11. Subparagraph 9 f incorporates substantially a previous recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,* and should be included in the statement of policy.

12. Mobilization measures should not be taken until the firmness of Soviet intent regarding the blockade has been determined. Therefore, subparagraph 9 f should precede subparagraph 9 e.

13. Subparagraph 9 i should be strengthened by relating it to the other recommended courses of action and to reflect a previous recommendation* of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

14. Subject to the foregoing recommended changes, NSC 5404 is satisfactory as a statement of national policy.

RECOMMENDATION

15. That the memorandum in the Enclosure, which expands upon the above Conclusions, be forwarded to the Secretary of Defense.

* See Enclosure to J.C.S. 1907/101

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ENCLOSURE

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: NSC 5404 - United States Policy on Berlin

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff submit herewith their views concerning a draft statement of policy proposed by the National Security Council Planning Board titled: "United States Policy on Berlin" (NSC 5404) which, if adopted, is intended to supersede NSC 132/1.

2. With the exceptions stated below regarding certain bracketed portions of the paper, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are in general agreement with the draft statement of policy contained in NSC 5404.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur in the qualifying statement expressed in the bracketed phraseology proposed for addition to subparagraph 4 a. In their opinion there is no question, all factors considered, but that the Western Powers are now in a stronger military position relative to the Soviet Bloc than they were in 1949. It is therefore recommended that the bracketed portion not be adopted.

4. The initial part of the final sentence of subparagraph 4 f is misleading in that it does not establish the fact that to sustain Berlin for a considerable period of time a full scale airlift of the 1948-49 type would be required. The Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest that this sentence be amended to read as follows:

"An-airlift A full scale airlift with the stockpile . . ."

5. The substance of the proposed paragraph 6 is considered to be contrary to the basic philosophy of the policy as epitomized in paragraph 5 of the paper and with which the Joint Chiefs of Staff concur. They are of the opinion that the United States and her allies have made and should continue to make clear to the USSR and to the world at large the seriousness with which the Allies would view attempts to restrict access to Berlin. If, notwithstanding, the Soviets attempt to impose a blockade, the Allies must assume that the Soviet purpose is to force them to abandon Berlin. It should be the position of the United States that under these circumstances temporizing measures would be unavailing. It would be of the utmost importance that the reaction of the Allies be so prompt and resolute as to leave no doubt in the Soviet mind as to Allied intentions. Indeed, any wavering or hesitancy to take positive action might well encourage the Soviets to intensifying their harassing measures and to solidify their position, possibly leading to a miscalculation which might well increase the chances of the situation evolving into general war. For these reasons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would be opposed to the inclusion of the proposed paragraph 6 in the statement of policy.

6. Regarding subparagraph 8 c, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the inclusion or omission of the words "if necessary" would be of no real consequence.

7. Concerning the bracketed phrases in subparagraph 8 e, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that neither of the proposals would set forth accurately the conditions and guidance under which the stockpile program should be reviewed. The paragraph should make clear that an airlift would not be resorted to as a primary measure to counter a blockade but only as a supplement to other more positive actions in preparation or in progress. In lieu of the adoption of either of the bracketed phrases, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest that subparagraph 8 e be amended to read as follows:

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"e. Review the present stockpile program in the light of the likelihood that, in the event of a new blockade, the Allies would resort to an airlift only as a supplement to other more positive measures."

8. The proposed subparagraph 9 d as now phrased appears to emphasize the airlift as a primary counteraction to a blockade. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that subparagraph 9 d is unnecessary in the statement of policy. If it is to be included, they recommend that it be amended by deleting all after the word "open".

9. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are strongly of the opinion that the bracketed subparagraph 9 f should be included in the statement of policy. This paragraph incorporates substantially the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff contained in paragraph 4 of their memorandum for you dated 9 December 1953, subject: "United States Policy and Courses of Action to Counter Possible Soviet or Satellite Action Against Berlin." In that memorandum the Joint Chiefs of Staff set forth their views in support of such a course of action.

10. It is considered that mobilization measures should not be taken until the firmness of Soviet intent regarding the blockade has been determined. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest that in order to indicate a proper sequence of actions, subparagraph 9 f precede subparagraph 9 e.

11. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that subparagraph 9 i should be strengthened by relating it to the other recommended courses of action and restate the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff contained in subparagraph 4 b of their 9 December 1953* memorandum. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest

* Enclosure to J.C.S. 1907/101

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Enclosure

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that the following sentence be added at the end of subparagraph 9 1:

"Prior to the use of force on a scale which might lead to general war, however, measures as enumerated in subparagraphs 9 a through g above should be taken to make clear to the USSR the nature of our determination."

12. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that, subject to the foregoing comments and recommendations, you concur in the adoption of the draft statement of policy contained in NSC 5404.

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